

REMARKS

Claims 50-56, 58, 59 and 62-68 are cancelled. Claims 70-84 are added, and are the only claims in the application.

New independent claim 70 is directed to the exemplary embodiment of Fig. 12. Claim 70 recites that the active area of the semiconductive material has an upper planar surface extending between the first opposing sides of the isolation masses. Claim 70 also recites that each of the opposing sides of the first portions, as well as those of the second portions, comprises straight segments which are normal relative to the active area upper planar surface. Further, claim 70 recites that the straight opposing segments of the second portions are displaced laterally relative to the straight opposing segments of the first portions, and thereby define opposing straight step surfaces of the pair of masses which extend between the respective straight segments of the first and second portions. Further, the opposing straight step surfaces are also recited in claim 70 to be normal to each of the respective straight segments of the first and second portions, and are also recited to be aligned with and extend from the active area upper planar surface. Further, claim 70 recites that each of the straight segments of the second portions extends from a respective one of the straight step surfaces to a respective top upper planar surface of the STI masses. All of such is clearly supported by Applicant's application as-filed in Fig. 12.

These attributes, when taken in combination with the other limitations of claim 70, are not shown in any of the applied references.

For example, neither Hsieh et al. nor Ding et al. discloses, nor remotely suggests, a pair of spaced STI masses having a portion projecting above the semiconductive material which is laterally displaced relative to straight linear segments of the STI masses received within semiconductive material which are also normal to the upper planar surface of the semiconductive material. Further, neither Hsieh et al. nor Ding et al. discloses, nor remotely suggests, opposing straight step surfaces of the pair of masses which extend between such respective straight segments of the first and second portions, nor such step surfaces being aligned with and extending from the upper planar surface of the active area.

Yu et al. is also lacking in many of these regards. Specifically, Yu et al. does not disclose the claim 70 recited opposing straight step surfaces of the pair of masses, which extend between respective straight segments of the first and second portions, as being aligned with and extending from the upper planar surface of the active area. It likewise does not disclose that each of the straight segments of the second portions extends from a respective one of the straight step surfaces to a respective top upper planar surface of the STI masses.

The recited Shirai et al. reference is equally lacking in these regards.

As each of the above references does not disclose at least those features described above, it is inconceivable that any combination of the previously applied references could suggest that which Applicant now recites in independent claim 70. Accordingly, independent claim 70, as presented, should be allowed, and action to that end is requested.

Dependent claim 71 recites that the first gate dielectric layer includes straight laterally outermost surfaces which bear against the straight segments of the second portions, and thereby are each normal to the active area upper planar surface. Such is inherent from Applicant's Fig.12 as-filed, wherein gate dielectric layer 60c has laterally outermost surfaces which bear against the respective second portions of the STI masses 24c. Claim 71 should be allowed as depending from an allowable base claim, and for its own recited features which are neither shown nor suggested in the cited art. Applicant's remaining dependent claims should also be allowed at least as depending from allowable base claims.

This application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance, and action to that end is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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